



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

333 ½ Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20003-1148

202-546-1969 / 800-VET-HELP

Website: www.nchv.org Email: info@nchv.org

Policy Statement: Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1, 2015— The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) is the nation’s only employment program wholly dedicated to serving homeless veterans, most of whom have serious and multiple barriers to re-entering the workforce. Administered by U.S. Department of Labor-Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS) for over two decades, HVRP served over 17,000 veterans in 2014. These men and women find employment at an average cost to the program of \$2,200 per placement, which represents a significant improvement over the last several years.

In order for HVRP grantees to receive renewed funding, they must guarantee job-driven job placement and retention services for homeless veterans. This is not simply an employment assistance program. Veteran clients benefit from wrap-around supports, as most grantees also provide residential stability, health services, and personal and family counseling. Additionally, successful programs leverage local service networks without incurring extra costs.

There are no giveaways in HVRP – the program simply provides an opportunity for those who have worn our nation’s uniform and fallen into homelessness to build the skills necessary to once again become gainfully employed and return to independent living as productive members of society.

Why is HVRP critical?

The issues facing homeless veterans fall into three primary categories: health issues, financial hardship, and a shortage of affordable housing for low-income individuals and families in most communities. HVRP is the most effective program available to address homeless veterans’ financial issues by helping them become gainfully employed. Through relatively small investments in community-based partners, HVRP capitalizes on the benefits provided by 156 existing service delivery systems nationwide.

Among the program’s hallmarks are long-term follow-up – grantees must check in with and offer support to veteran participants for 270 days after clients enter employment – and a commitment to serve women veterans and veterans with families. A recent study by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) found that women veterans, who now account for almost 11% of the veteran population, are three times more likely to become homeless than their non-veteran counterparts.

HVRP is critical in light of the high veteran unemployment rate, especially among young veterans. In November 2014, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the unemployment rate among post-9/11 veterans was 5.7%, with post-9/11 women veterans experiencing a higher unemployment rate of 8.1%. These numbers are down from a year earlier, with the total unemployment rate of 5.7% down from 9.9% for the same month the year before. However, they remain elevated and a cause for concern, particularly regarding women veterans.

Mission: The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans will end homelessness among veterans by shaping public policy, promoting collaboration, and building the capacity of service providers.

The number of young homeless veterans, meanwhile, is increasing. The most recent data shows that approximately 12,700 Iraq- and Afghanistan-era veterans experienced homelessness in 2010. We currently have no reliable predictions for the number of veterans from this period that will become homeless in the years to come. Maintaining a strong support system, with HVRP providing employment training and placement, is the best defense against a resurgence of veteran homelessness in the future.

What should Congress do?

NCHV recommends that Congress reauthorize and fund HVRP at \$100 million beyond the maturity of the Five-Year Plan (FY 2015). The HVRP program is currently authorized at \$50 million through FY 2015, yet is underfunded by about \$12 million. This highly successful, specifically targeted program should be expanded across the country. To this end, the authorization for the program should be raised to \$100 million and funds should be appropriated to match the new authorization.

In recent years there have been calls to consolidate federal employment assistance programs. Due to its core link to Department of Labor resources and data, and unique homeless veteran target populations, however, HVRP cannot be incorporated into other programs without sacrificing its effectiveness and efficiencies. Furthermore, NCHV believes the program's continued administrative location at the Department of Labor is critical to its sustained success.

How can I learn more about HVRP?

The NCHV-sponsored *Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program Best Practices Project* is a comprehensive report on the nation's highest-performing HVRP programs. It is designed to inform grant-seeking organizations and government agencies about the essential components of successful, replicable programs. The report represents programs from urban and rural areas, faith- and community-based organizations, as well as large and small operations.

To download the report, go to www.nchv.org/images/uploads/HVRP_Best_Practices_Vol.2_WEB.pdf.

To view Best Practices videos, go to http://nchv.org/index.php/connect/story/hvrp_best_practices_resources.